

Standard 5-2: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the continued westward expansion of the United States.

5-2.4 Provide examples of conflict and cooperation between occupational and ethnic groups in the West, including miners, ranchers, and cowboys; Native Americans and Mexican Americans; and European and Asian immigrants. (E, H)

Taxonomy Level: B 2 Understand/ Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

This is the first and only time that students will specifically focus on cooperation and the conflict among groups in the West.

In the 4th grade, students explained how conflicts and cooperation among the Native Americans, Europeans, and Africans influenced colonial events including the French and Indian Wars, slave revolts, Native American wars, and trade (4-2.7). Students also compared the experiences of different groups who migrated and settled in the West, including their reasons for migrating, their experiences on the trails and at their destinations, the cooperation and conflict between and among the different groups, and the nature of their daily lives (4-5.6).

In United States history, students will explain the impact and challenges of westward movement, including the major land acquisitions, people's motivations for moving west, railroad construction, the displacement of Native Americans, and the its impact on the developing American character (USHC-3.1).

It is essential for students to know:

Although the journey West often required groups of people to help one another, settlement also brought conflict among groups that competed for access to the natural resources of the region.

The discovery of gold and silver brought men westward seeking their fortunes. Prospectors competed with one another to find the precious minerals and often created a lawless society. Mining companies that had the equipment to dig deeper into the terrain competed with solitary proprietors for claims to the richest sites. Boom towns grew quickly to serve the needs of the miners and just as quickly turned to ghost towns once the ore vein had been depleted.

Ranchers and cowboys cooperated to develop the cattle raising industry. Cowboys drove the herds, owned by the ranchers, across the open plains to the nearest railroad depot and shipped them to processing plants farther east. They competed with rustlers and often came in conflict with the townspeople they encountered along the way. After the Civil War, when farmers settled and fenced large parts of the plains, they interfered with the open ranges across which cowboys drove the herds. The cowboys, who did not want to be fenced in, and the farmers, who built the fences, fought over how the western lands should be used and who should use them. The era of the cattle drive did not survive the establishment of farms on the plains.

At first, many **Native Americans** welcomed and cooperated with explorers of the West. As more and more people migrated to the West, the relationship between the Native Americans and the settlers became increasingly hostile. The railroad destroyed the buffalo and with it, much of the traditional Native American culture. In the second half of the 1800's, farmers and miners claimed the lands that the Native Americans believed to be theirs. Native Americans were forced to live on reservations. Those who resisted were hunted down by the United States army. There were massacres of Native Americans by the army. After silver was discovered in the Black Hills, the Native Americans who lived there were driven out.

Many **Mexican Americans** were also driven from their land. The southwestern part of the United States and the California coast had both belonged to Spain and then Mexico until the Mexican War in the 1840s. So the Mexicans who lived in those regions owned property. After the war, Mexicans, who were living in land ceded by treaty to the United States, were discriminated against. As a result, many lost title to their lands.

Some European immigrants moved to the West to start new lives. (Many European immigrants however were too poor to move to the West and stayed in the industrial cities of the East and Midwest). Many settled in regions with others from their home countries. They were resented by those who had been born in the United States (nativism). However, **European Americans** formed communities that engaged in cooperative activities, such as barn raisings, and helped each other to be successful in this new land.

Asian immigrants came to the United States to search for gold and later, in large numbers, to build the transcontinental railroads. While European immigrants, such as the Irish, built from the east to west, Chinese workers laid rails from west to east. They were often paid less than white workers and suffered from discrimination at the work sites because of their unique culture. Their presence was tolerated so long as there was the railroad to build. Once the major projects were completed, the Chinese attempted to compete with white men in mining and also provided services, such as laundries, for the miners in the boom towns. This competition for scarce resources and jobs led to increasing prejudices against the Chinese. Soon, the United States government passed a law excluding the Chinese from entrance as immigrants to the United States.

It is not essential for students to know:

It is not essential for students to know the name of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Students do not need to know the names of the cattle trails along which herds were driven to market. They do not need to know about specific Native American tribes or reservations. They do not need to know the names of the massacres of Native Americans or battles fought between the United States army and the Native Americans. Students do not need to know the names of any specific Mexican families that were displaced as a result of discrimination.

Assessment guidelines:

Appropriate assessments will require students to **summarize** the cooperation and conflict between different groups that settled the West. Students should also be able to **explain** the reasons for conflict and cooperation among the groups. They should be able to **compare** cooperation and conflict between settlers and Native American in the West with conflict and cooperation between colonists and Native Americans.